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An
Inaugural
Essay
on
Cholera Morbus

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Copious discharges of bilious matter upwards and downwards, accompanied with gripings and Spasms, constitute Cholera Morbus. — This disease is placed by Cullen in the class Neuroses and order Spasmi, and by Doctor Chapman it is arranged among the diseases of the digestive System.

The causes of this disease are the same as those which produce its kindred affections. bilious fever, bilious Colic &c: Viz Marsh Miasmata, violent summer heats, suddenly succeeded by cold, intemperance in eating and drinking &c; but it is more than probable that these last only act as exciting causes on a system already strongly predisposed to an attack of the disease from the previous morbid action produced by Marsh Miasmata.

Like other gastric affections, this disease

comes on with nausia, painful sensations about the epigastric region, followed by vomiting and purging, first of the contents of the stomach and bowels and afterwards of pure Bile, attended with griping pains and spasmodic affections of the muscles of the abdomen: the pulse is weak and fluttering and the strength considerably prostrated: as the disease advances, all the above symtoms become much aggravated, the debility becomes extreme, the vomiting and purging unremitting, the pulse weak and almost imperceptible, the surface cold and pallid, the respiration hurried, with great anxiety and restlessness, attended by cramps of the muscles of the extremities, and should the patient not be very soon relieved, death soon puts an end to the appalling scene—

The Diagnoses of Cholera are plain: it is distinguished from dysentery and diarrhoea by

the evacuations consisting of pure bile unmixed with blood and faculent matter and from Colic by the absence of constipation.

The Prognosis is unfavorable when there are faintings, cold sweats, great debility, hiccoughs and Spasms: the absence of the unfavorable symptoms of course shew the absence of immediate danger—

Of the Pathology of this disease I think there can be but little doubt of its being a gastric affection and extended sympathetically to the Liver.

This is contrary to popular opinion, but I am inclined to concur with Doctor Chapman as to its primary seat, from the following considerations viz: the stomach shews the first symptoms of an attack, the first discharges are not bile, but consist simply of the contents of the stomach and not till irritation of the stomach has lasted sometime, do the bilious evacuations appear. There are frequently collections of Bile, as in bilious fever, without producing Cholera. Although judging from appear-

=ances the bile is much more vitiated in this dis-
ease than usual, I think in fact we should consid
-er it more bland and inoffensive than in the or-
dinary state; considering the rapidity, with
which it is secreted and how soon it passes off—

Believing Doctor Chapman's Theory of
the disease to be correct I shall follow
him in the Treatment.

At the commencement of the dis
ease Opium will in many cases completely
arrest and overcome every bad symtom;
yet in most cases I think it advisable to
rid the stomach of its irritating contents
by an emetic of Ipecacuanha followed by copi-
ous draughts of warm water or chamomile Tea.
The latter is preferable if much debility be pre-
sent— The old mode of treating the disease
by copious draughts of warm fluids was tam-
pering with a violent disease with feeble and
inefficient remedies; and as their object was

to empty the stomach I can not conceive why they neglected the more certain and active measures for producing the effect. I think the Ipecacuanha in this case is possessed of the power not only of emptying the stomach, but of relaxing the spasms and promoting a determination to the skin, which are desirable objects.

If the pain be violent and the patient able to bear it, venisection should next be resorted to; but we can not be governed in this as in most diseases by the pulse as to its propriety or the extent to which it should be carried. The general aspect of the case will commonly indicate or forbid the use of the lancet. In doubtful cases it would be better to detract a small quantity and watch the effect, and if the pulse rise from it, which is not uncommon, we can repeat at pleasure.

The warm bath is very applicable to this disease, more especially when the lancet is

indicated by the pain but can not be used on account of debility. It helps to relieve spasm and produce a general instead of a local excitement, it brings on an open form of the disease and thereby enables us to attack it without hesitating as to the propriety of our other remedies, more particularly venisection.

The preceding remedies failing it will be proper, again to resort to opium given both by the mouth and as an Enema, or it may be given in tincture with the effervescent draught and repeated pro re nata. Lime water and milk, an infusion of serpentaria, strong coffee without cream or sugar, or small quantities of hot water taken frequently, should be tried successively if the vomiting continue obstinate. Calomel in small and repeated doses will frequently succeed in allaying the irritability of the stomach and

Bowels — External applications to the region of the Stomach are highly valuable and among the most so may be enumerated the Clove Bag, flannels wrung out of hot spirits of Turpentine, camphorated Spirits or strongly impregnated with the warmer spices, as pepper, Mustard &c; but above all our chief confidence should be reposed in Blisters placed over the Stomach and applied to the extremities also, if the general system should require it — If the disease advance too rapidly for the drawing of a blister we may use the following:

℞. Nitric Acid one part
Water . . . two parts —

A linen rag may be dipped in this and applied over the stomach for a moment or two: if it be too violent in its action it may be neutralized by a solution of the Carb. of Potash —

Having by these means checked the progress

of the disease our attention should next be directed to prevent a recurrence, to which the patient is very liable: to effect which we should direct our patient to avoid most sedulously the exciting causes, as exposure to the hot sun, night air, excesses in eating or drinking, violent exercise, and cold extremities should be particularly guarded against. The wearing of flannel next to the skin is of infinite importance and should not be overlooked. The Bowels should be kept in a soluble state by small doses of magnesia or rhubarb and tone imparted to the alimentary Canal by tonics; the best of which are the Quassia, Colombo and Liquor Vitriol. A diet light and nutritive should be selected.